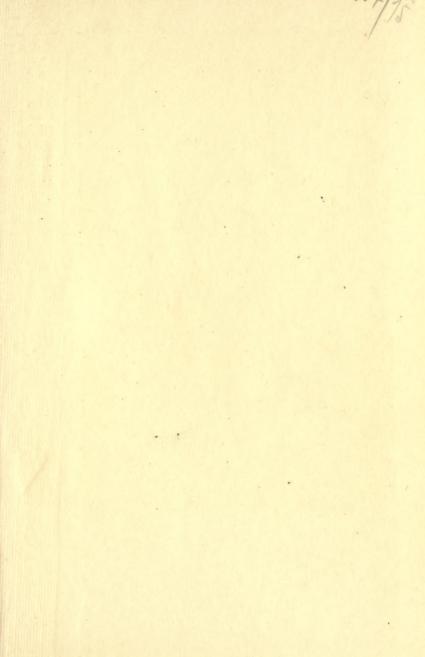
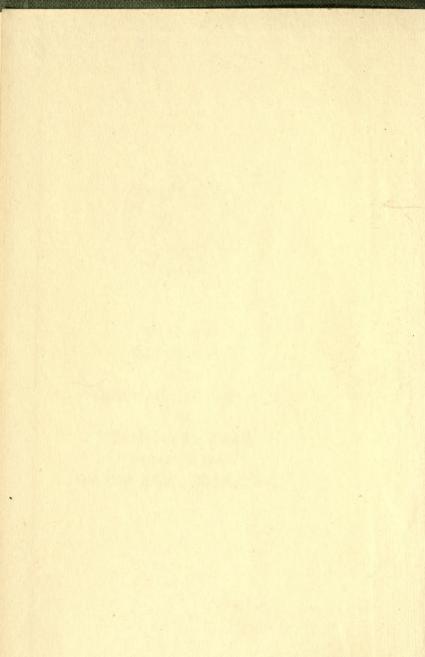
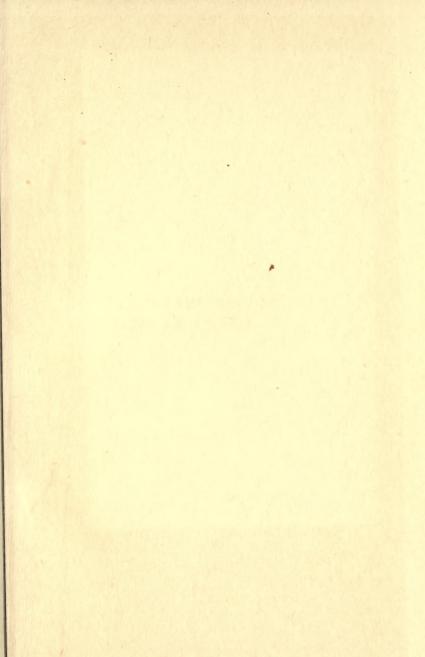


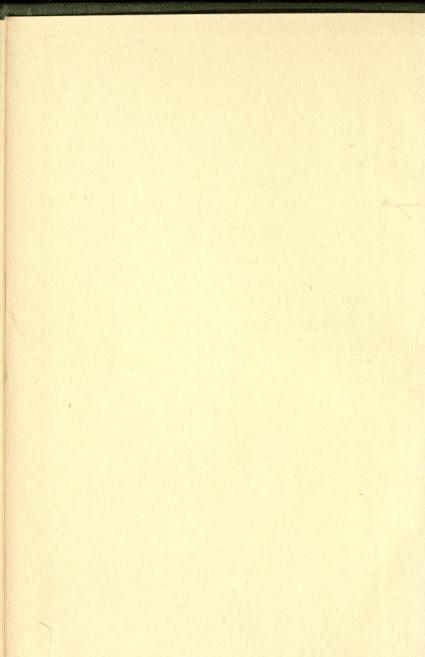


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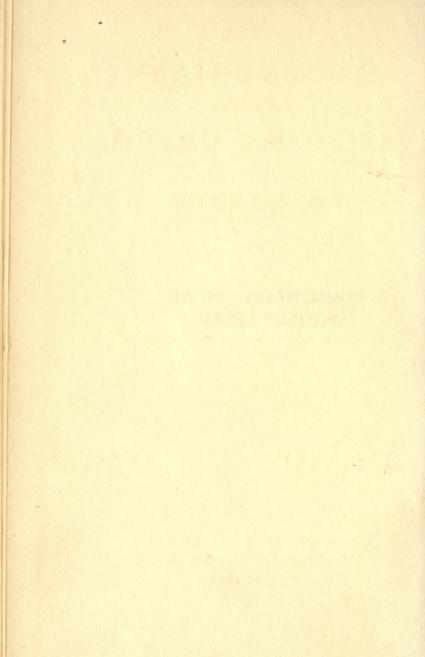








A COMMENTARY ON THE APOSTLES' CREED





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ON THE

APOSTLES' CREED

BY

TYRANNIUS RUFINUS

PRESBYTER OF AQUILEIA

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TRANSLATOR'S PREFACE

THE following translation is intended to be used with the edition of the text which has been prepared by the present writer. Rufinus is nearly always easy to understand, but sometimes hard to translate. The aim of this translation has been to give as literal a rendering as is consistent with readable English. For notes and explanations the edition of the text should be consulted.

E. F. M.

ROSLIN

January, 1916



A COMMENTARY ON THE APOSTLES' CREED

BY TYRANNIUS RUFINUS

PRESBYTER OF AQUILEIA

I. My mind, most faithful Bishop Laurentius, has as little inclination as capacity for writing; for I know that to submit to general criticism a poor and feeble intelligence is a matter of no small peril. In your letter, however, you rashly, if you will pardon the expression, entreat me by the Sacraments of Christ, which I ever hold in the greatest reverence, to compose something for you on the subject of the Faith, in accordance with the tradition and meaning of the Creed. Now, although by your demand you impose upon me a burden which is beyond my strength-for indeed I do not forget the saying of the wise that "it is dangerous to speak of God even what is true," yet, if you will aid by your prayers the obligation laid upon me by your request, I will endeavour to say something, more from a respect for your commands than from any false confidence in my own ability. And what I shall say will seem not so much deserving of consideration by the fully instructed as adapted to the understanding of children and first beginners in Christ.

I am aware, indeed, that some distinguished authors have written on these matters with devotion and conciseness. I know also that the heretic Photinus has written on this same subject, not, however, with the intention of explaining to his readers the meaning of the text, but of distorting simple and straightforward language in order to prove his own doctrines. And this, although the Holy Spirit has provided that in such forms no expression should be used which is either ambiguous or obscure, or inconsistent with the rest. For so is that prophecy fulfilled which says, "Finishing and cutting short the word in equity: for a short word will the Lord make upon the earth." We shall therefore endeavour to assign once again to the Apostles' words their own simple meaning, or to supply such things as former writers appear to have omitted. But in order that the meaning of this "short word," as we have called it, may become more plain, we will trace from the beginning the manner in which this tradition has been given to the Churches.

2. Our fathers of old have recorded that, after the ascension of the Lord, when, by the coming of the Holy Ghost, tongues of fire had rested upon each of the Apostles, that they might speak in manifold and diverse languages, so that no people, however strange, no speech, however barbarous, should seem to them inaccessible or beyond attainment, they received command from the Lord each to go to the various nations and preach the word of God. And thus, before separating from one another, they first agreed together upon a fixed standard for their future preaching, that so by no possibility, when they had dispersed, could they vary in their teaching of those who were called to believe in Christ. When, therefore, they had all met together, and were filled with the Holy Ghost, they composed, as we have

¹ Isaiah x. 22, 23, and so quoted in Rom. ix. 28.

said, this short token of their future preaching, each contributing to the one decree his own decision. And this rule they resolved was to be given to believers.

They also determined for many excellent reasons that this rule should be called by the name symbol. For symbol in Greek can mean both indicium and also collatio, that is to say, a joint contribution made by several. As indeed was made by the Apostles in these sentences where each contributed his own decision to the common decree. Further, it is called indicium or signum, a token or sign, because at that time, as the Apostle Paul says, 1 and as is related in the Acts of the Apostles,2 many of the vagabond Jews pretended to be the Apostles of Christ, and for the sake of gain or of their belly went about preaching, using the name of Christ indeed, but not proclaiming their message according to the exact lines of tradition. For which reason the Apostles prescribed this summary as a token whereby he who preached Christ truly and according to the Apostolic rules might be recognised. Finally, it is said that in civil wars this custom is also observed, and that since the armour of both parties is alike, and their language, manners, and rules of warfare are the same, each commander, in order to prevent deceit or treachery, delivers to his soldiers a separate watchword (symbol), which is called in Latin signum or indicium. In this way, if any doubtful person present himself, he is asked the watchword (symbol), and thus discloses whether he is friend or foe. And it is for this reason that these words are not written down on paper or parchment, but are preserved within the hearts of the faithful, that so it may be certain

¹ Rom. xvi. 18. ² Acts xix. 13.

that no one has acquired them by reading—as is sometimes the case even with unbelievers—but has learnt them from the tradition of the Apostles.

When, therefore, as we have said, the Apostles were now ready to depart to their preaching, they decided upon this token of their unity in the faith. And thus, unlike the sons of Noah,1 who, before separating from one another, constructed a tower of baked bricks and pitch, whose top should reach to heaven, the Apostles raised a monument of faith from the living stones and pearls of the Lord, which might withstand the attacks of the enemy, being such that no winds could shake, nor floods undermine, nor force of storm or tempest overthrow it. Hence it was right that the former, who, before separating from one another, were building a tower of pride, should be condemned to the confusion of tongues, so that no one could understand his neighbour's speech; while the latter, who were constructing a tower of faith, should be endowed with the knowledge and understanding of all languages, that thus the one might be proved a token of sin, the other of faith. But we must now proceed to say something of these pearls, among which is placed first the source and origin of all, in the words :-

3. I BELIEVE IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY. But before I begin to discuss the exact meaning of these words, I think it is here not unsuitable to mention that in various Churches certain additions to this clause are to be found. This, however, we do not observe to be the case in the Church of the city of Rome. The reason is, I imagine, that no heresy has ever had its origin there, and also because the ancient custom

¹ Gen. xi. 1-10.

is there still maintained, that those who are about to receive the grace of Baptism recite the Creed in public, that is, in the audience of the faithful, and thus the hearing of their elders in the faith will not permit the addition even of a single word. Whereas, in other places, as far as we can understand, additions appear to have been made on account of certain heretics, since by this means, it was supposed, all novelty of doctrine might be excluded. We ourselves, however, follow that order which through the grace of Baptism we received in the Church of Aquileia.

I BELIEVE is placed first of all, as also Paul the Apostle, in writing to the Hebrews, says, "He that cometh to God must first of all believe that he is, and that he is a rewarder of those who believe on him."1 And the Prophet says, "Except ye have believed, ye will not understand."2 In order, therefore, that the way to understanding may be open to you, you rightly first make profession of your belief. For no one embarks upon the sea, and commits himself to the watery deep, unless he believes that he can find safety. Nor does the farmer sow his seed in the furrows, or scatter his grain upon the earth, but in the belief that the showers of rain will come, and the sun will give its heat, so that by their fostering care the earth will produce and multiply, and, aided by the gentle breath of winds, bring to maturity her fruits. Nothing indeed in life can ever be accomplished unless there be first a readiness to believe. What wonder then, if, when coming to God, we first of all profess that we believe, since without this we cannot even live our ordinary life. We have therefore first made these remarks by ways of pre-

¹ Hebr. xi. 6. 2 Isa. vii. 9.

face, because the Pagans often object to us that our religion, inasmuch as it lacks reason, rests solely upon persuasion and belief. Hence we have shown that nothing can be achieved nor endure unless there be first the power to believe. And lastly, marriages are contracted in the belief that children will follow; boys also are sent to learn the arts in the belief that the learning of the masters will be transferred to their pupils; so also does one man take to himself the dignity of empire in the belief that peoples and cities and troops of soldiers will obey him. But if no one ever attempts any of these things unless he first believes that it will succeed, surely much more is it by belief that we may attain to a knowledge of God. Let us now see what this short sentence of the Creed sets forth.

4. "I BELIEVE," it says, "IN GOD THE FATHER ALMIGHTY." The Eastern Churches almost all have the article in this form: "I believe in one God the Father Almighty." And again in the next sentence, where we say, "And in Christ Jesus, His only Son, our Lord," they have "And in one (Lord) our Lord Jesus Christ, His only Son"; confessing, that is to say, "one God," and "one Lord," by the authority of the Apostle Paul. We shall, however, return to this later. In the meanwhile we may see what is meant by the words, "In God the Father Almighty."

"God," so far as the mind of man can imagine, is the name of that nature or substance which is above all things. "Father" is a word of secret and unspeakable mystery. When you hear the word "God," you must understand a substance without beginning, without end, simple, uncom-

¹ I Cor. viii. 6.

pounded, invisible, incorporeal, ineffable, inestimable, in which nothing is added, nothing is created. For He is without author who is absolute author of all things. And when you hear the word "Father," you must understand the Father of a Son, who is indeed the image of that same substance. For as no one is called lord unless he has some possession or servant whose lord he is, and no one is called master unless he has a disciple, so no one can possibly be called father unless he has a son. Hence the very name Father proves that with the Father there equally exists a Son.

Now I do not wish that you should discuss the manner in which God begat the Son, or that you should intrude too curiously into that profound mystery, lest perhaps, while you examine too persistently into the brightness of that light inaccessible, you should lose the faint glimpse which by divine favour has been granted to mortals. But if you are of opinion that in this matter we should use every possible means of investigation, you ought first to propound to yourself such questions as concern ourselves, and then, if you have been able to answer them rightly, to press on from things earthly to things heavenly, from the visible to the invisible. First of all then determine, if you can, how the mind within you is able to produce a word, and what power of recollection it possesses; and how these, though differing in actual practice are yet the same in their substance and nature; and although they proceed from the mind, yet they are never separated from it. And if these, though contained within us and within the very being of our soul, appear as obscure to us as they are invisible to our bodily sight, we will take more evident instances for our inquiry. How is it that a spring produces a river from itself? By what power is it carried rapidly into the stream? How is it that, while the river and the spring are one and inseparable, yet the river can neither be thought of nor spoken of as the spring, nor the spring as the river, and yet he who has seen the river has also seen the spring.

In the first place, then, apply yourself to explain these matters, and discuss, if you are able, that which is ready here to hand; and then you shall proceed to more exalted themes. Yet do not think that I wish you at once to ascend from the earth beyond the heavens, but first, if you agree, I would take you to that firmament which our eyes can see, and there you shall determine, if you can, the nature of that light which is visible, and how the celestial fire produces from itself the radiance of light, and how also it produces heat; and how, though these are actually three, yet they are one in substance. But even if you are able to investigate each one of these, you must know that the mystery of the divine generation is yet more strange and more sublime in so far as the Creator is more powerful than the creature, the Artist more excellent than His work, and as He who is for ever is more noble than that which had its beginning out of nothing.

That God therefore is the Father of His only Son our Lord is to be believed, not discussed: for it is not right that a servant should dispute the birth of his lord. The Father has testified from heaven, saying, "This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleased: hear him." Thus the Father declares that He is His Son and bids us hear Him. The Son says, "He that seeth me seeth the Father also," and I and

¹ Matt. iii. 17. ² John xiv. 9.

the Father are one," and "I came forth from God and am come into the world." Who then would interpose himself as a disputant between these words of the Father and the Son, so as to divide the Godhead, disunite the relation, separate the substance, sever the spirit, and deny that to be true which the Truth asserts?

God therefore is a true Father as the Father of the Truth, not creating something from without, but generating the Son from that which He Himself is; or, in other words, the Wise generates Wisdom, the Just Justice, the Eternal Eternity, the Immortal Immortality, the Invisible the Invisible, as Light generating Brightness, as Mind generating the Word.

5. Now whereas we have said that the Eastern Churches have the words, "In one God the Father Almighty" and "In one Lord," the word "one" is not to be understood numerically but absolutely. For example, if it is said "one man" or "one horse," then the word "one" is used numerically. For it is possible that there may be a second and third man or horse. Where, however, the addition of a second or third is not possible, if we say "one," we use the term not numerically but absolutely. So that if, for example, we say "one sun," the word "one" there means that a second or third cannot be added, since there is but one sun. Much more then is God, when He is said to be "one," called "one," not numerically but absolutely, that is to say, He is spoken of as "one," because there is no other. In the same way it is to be understood of the Lord, that He is one Lord, Jesus Christ, through Whom God the Father holds rule over all; whence also in the next clause God is declared "Almighty." 1 John x. 30. 2 John xvi. 28.

Now He is called Almighty because He holds dominion over all things. But the Father possesses all things through His Son, as also the Apostle says, "Through him were created all things, visible and invisible, whether they be thrones, or dominions, or principalities, or powers."1 Again, when writing to the Hebrews, he says, "Through him also he made the worlds," and "He appointed him heir of all things."2 By "appointed" we must understand "generated." But if the Father made the worlds through Him, and all things were created through Him, and He is heir of all things, then it is through Him that He possesses dominion over all things. Because, as light is born of light, and truth of truth, so Almighty is born of Almighty. As it is written of the Seraphim in the Revelation of John, "And they have no rest day and night, crying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God of Sabaoth, which was, and which is, and which is to come, the Almighty."3 He therefore which "is to come" is called "Almighty." And what other is there who "is to come" but Christ, the Son of God ?

To these words there is added "INVISIBLE AND IMPASSIBLE." I would have you know that these two words are not to be found in the Creed of the Roman Church. Further, it is well known that they were inserted by our Church on account of the Sabellian heresy, called by us the "Patripassian," that heresy, namely, which asserts that the Father Himself was born of the Virgin and was made visible, and affirms that He suffered in the flesh. In order, therefore, to exclude such impiety with regard to the Father our forefathers, it seems, added these words, calling the Father

¹ Col. i. 16. ² Hebr. i. 2. ³ Rev. iv. 8.

"invisible and impassible." For it is obvious that the Son, and not the Father, became incarnate and was born in the flesh, and that by means of His nativity in the flesh the Son became visible and passible. In respect, however, of that immortal substance of the Godhead, which He has one and the same with the Father, neither the Father, nor the Son, nor the Holy Ghost is to be believed visible or passible. Yet with regard to His condescension in assuming flesh, the Son was both seen and also suffered in the flesh. As also the Prophet had foretold, saying, "This is our God: no other shall be accounted of in comparison of Him. He hath found out all the way of knowledge, and hath given it unto Jacob his servant and to Israel his beloved. Afterward he shewed himself upon the earth, and conversed with men."

6. And in Christ Jesus, His only Son, our Lord. "Jesus" is a Hebrew word meaning in our language "Saviour." "Christ" is so called from "chrism," namely, unction. For we read in the Books of Moses that Auses, the son of Nave, when he had been chosen to lead the people, had his name changed and was called, instead of Auses, Jesus, thus shewing, it would seem, that this was a name proper for princes and leaders, that is to say, for those who should bring salvation to the people that followed them. Therefore the one was called "Jesus," because he led his people out from the land of Egypt, relieving them from the wanderings of the wilderness, and bringing them to the promised land; the second was called Jesus, because He led His people out from the darkness of ignorance, recalling

¹ Baruch iii. 35-37.

them from the errors of the world, and bringing them to the kingdom of heaven.

"Christ" is both a priestly and a royal name. For in former days both priests and kings were consecrated with the ointment of chrism; though these, as being mortal and corruptible, were anointed with ointment of corruptible matter. Yet He is made Christ by the anointing of the Holy Spirit, as the Scripture says of Him, "Whom the Father hath anointed with the Holy Spirit sent down from heaven." Isaiah also had predicted the same, saying in the person of the Son, "The Spirit of the Lord is upon me, for which cause he hath anointed me, he hath sent me to preach good tidings to the poor." 2

Since, therefore, we have shown what "Jesus" is, who saves His people, and what "Christ" is, who was made a High Priest for ever, let us now see from what follows of whom it is that the words are said, "His only Son, our Lord." For in them we learn that this Jesus, of whom we have spoken, and this Christ, whose name we have discussed, is "the only Son of God," and "our Lord." But that you may not by any chance imagine that these human names have merely an earthly meaning, it is also said that He is "the only Son of God, our Lord." For He is One born of One, as also there is one brightness of light and one word of the mind. Nor does an incorporeal generation descend to the use of the plural number or admit of division, where He who is born is never separated from Him who begets. He is one, only, as thought is to the mind, as wisdom to the wise, as a word to the understanding, as valour to the brave. For

¹ Acts x. 38. ² Isa. lxi. 1, cp. Luke iv. 18.

as the Father is said by the Apostle to be "the only wise," so also the Son alone is called wisdom. He is then "the only Son." And although in glory, eternity, virtue, dominion, and power, He is as the Father, yet He has not all these unoriginately as the Father, but has them from the Father, as the Son, without beginning, and as equal; and although He is the Head of all things, yet the Father is the Head of Him. For so it is written, "The head of Christ is God." 2

7. And when you hear the word "Son" do not imagine a birth after the flesh, but remember that it refers to an incorporeal substance and a simple nature. For if it be the case, as we have already said, that when the understanding generates a word, or the mind sense, or light produces brightness from itself, nothing of this kind is looked for, nor any manner of weakness suspected in such a method of generation, how much purer and holier should our thought be of the Creator of all these!

But perhaps you may say, The generation of which you speak is unsubstantial. For light does not produce substantial brightness, nor the understanding generate a substantial word, yet the Son of God, it is asserted, was generated substantially. To this first of all we would reply that when in other things examples are used, the similarity cannot be maintained in every single particular, but only in some point for which the example was taken does the resemblance hold good. For instance, when it is said in the Gospel, "The kingdom of heaven is like leaven, which a woman hid in three measures of meal," are we to suppose that the kingdom of

¹ Rom. xvi. 27. ² 1 Cor. xi. 3.

⁸ Matt. xiii. 33.

heaven is in all respects like leaven, so that in substance it is palpable and perishable, and thus can become sour and putrid? But this example, it is clear, was used for the one object alone, namely, to shew how, by the simple preaching of God's Word, the minds of men can, as it were, cohere together through the leaven of faith. In the same way, when it is said, "The kingdom of heaven is like unto a net cast into the sea, which draws in fishes of every kind," are we here also to imagine that the substance of the kingdom of heaven is to be likened in every respect to the twine from which a net is made, or the knots with which the meshes are tied? It is plain that the sole object of the comparison is to shew that just as a net brings fishes to the shore from the depths of the sea, so by the preaching of the kingdom of heaven the souls of men are freed from the depths of the error of this world. Hence it is obvious that examples do not resemble in every particular those things which they are used to exemplify. Otherwise, if they were the same in all respects, they would no longer be called examples, but would obviously be the actual things themselves.

8. It is further to be observed that no creature can be such as its Creator. And therefore just as the Divine substance is without comparison, so also is the Divinity. Moreover we must add that every creature is made from nothing. If then the unsubstantial spark of which fire consists begets of itself a creature which is made from nothing, and in it still preserves its own original condition, why could not the substance of that eternal Light, which has ever existed because it has within it nothing unsubstantial, produce from

¹ Matt. xiii. 47.

itself substantial brightness? And therefore the Son is rightly called "only." For He who has been so born is one, only, and alone. Now that which is alone cannot admit of comparison. Nor can He who made all things be of the same substance as the things which He has made. Such therefore is Christ Jesus, the only Son of God, who is also our Lord. The word "only" may be referred both to "Son" and to "Lord." For Jesus Christ is "only" both as truly Son and as one Lord. For indeed all other sons, though they are spoken of as sons, are so called by grace of adoption, and not by reason of their true nature. And if others also are called lords, they are so called from an authority which is deputed and not inherent. But He alone is the only Son and the only Lord, as also the Apostle says, "And one Lord Jesus Christ, through whom are all things."1 Therefore, after the Creed, according to its duly ordered plan, has set forth the ineffable mystery of the birth of the Son from the Father, it now descends to tell of the dispensation which He deigned to enter upon for man's salvation. And thus of Him whom it but lately called "the only Son of God," and "our Lord," it now says,

9. Who was born by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin Mary. This birth here among men relates to the Divine dispensation, the other to the Divine substance: the one is by condescension, the other by nature. He is born by the Holy Ghost of the Virgin. At this point a chaste ear and pure mind is needed. For you must understand that now a temple has been fashioned within the womb of a virgin for Him of whom you but lately learnt that He was born ineffably of

¹ I Cor. viii. 6.

the Father. And just as in the sacred operation of the Holy Ghost no thought of imperfection is possible, so also in the birth from a virgin no defilement is to be imagined. For this was a new birth given to the world, and with good reason. For He who is the only Son in heaven is by consequence the only Son on earth, and is born as no other.

The words written by the Prophets concerning Him, "A virgin shall conceive and bring forth a Son," are well known to all and are many times quoted in the Gospels. But even the miraculous manner of that birth had been signified by the Prophet Ezekiel, who calls Mary figuratively "the Gate of the Lord," that is to say, the gate by which the Lord came into the world. He therefore thus speaks, "The gate of the Lord which looks toward the East shall be closed, and shall not be opened, and no one shall pass through it, because the Lord God of Israel shall pass through it, and it shall be closed."2 What could be so plainly said with reference to the preservation of the Virgin's chastity. That Gate of Virginity was closed; through it the Lord God of Israel entered; through it He came forth into this world from the Virgin's womb: and her virginity being preserved, the Gate of the Virgin remained closed for ever. Therefore the Holy Ghost is spoken of as the creator of the Lord's flesh and of His temple.

10. You must now also begin to understand the majesty of the Holy Ghost. For the words of the Gospel testify of Him that when the angel spoke to the Virgin and said, "Thou shalt bring forth a son and shalt call his name Jesus, for he shall save his people from their sins," she answered, "How

¹ Isa. vii. 14. ² Ezek. xliv. 2. ³ Matt. i. 21.

shall this be, seeing that I know not a man?" Whereupon the angel said to her, "The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall overshadow thee: therefore also that holy thing which shall be born of thee shall be called the Son of God." See here how the Trinity cooperates together. The Holy Ghost is spoken of as coming upon the Virgin, and the Power of the Highest as overshadowing her. What is the Power of the Highest but Christ Himself, who is the Power of God and the Wisdom of God? To whom then does this Power belong? The Highest, you reply. There is therefore here present the Highest, there is also present the Power of the Highest, and there is present the Holy Ghost. This is the Trinity, everywhere latent, and everywhere apparent, distinct in names and persons, but inseparable in the substance of the Godhead. And although the Son alone is born of the Virgin, yet there is present also the Highest, and there is present the Holy Ghost, that the conception and bringing forth of the Virgin may both be sanctified.

Prophetical Scriptures, may perhaps confute the Jews, unbelieving and incredulous though they are. But the Pagans often ridicule us when they hear us speak of a virgin birth. We must therefore say a few words in reply to their objections. Every birth, I suppose, depends upon three things. There must be a woman of right age, she must have intercourse with a man, and her womb must not be barren. Of these three things, in the birth of which we speak, one was wanting, namely, the man. And this want, since He who was

¹ Luke i. 34 f.

born was not an earthly but a heavenly man, was supplied by the heavenly Spirit, the chastity of the Virgin remaining inviolate. But why should it be thought marvellous that a virgin should conceive, when it is well known that in the East a bird, called the phoenix, is born and reborn without parents in such a way that it still ever remains one, and by its birth and rebirth continually succeeds itself? That bees neither have intercourse nor bring forth young is a fact well known to all. And there are also other creatures which are born in some such manner. Is it therefore to be thought incredible that a thing was done by divine power, for the restoration of the whole world, of which examples are to be seen in the animals? And indeed it is strange that this should appear to the Gentiles to be impossible, when they believe that their own Minerva was born from the brain of Jupiter. Could anything be more difficult to believe, or more contrary to nature? For in the one case there was a woman, the order of nature was kept, there was conception, and in due time birth took place; in the other there was no female at all, but man only, and then birth. Why should he who believes the one marvel at the other? But they also say that Father Bacchus was born from the thigh of Jupiter. Here you have another kind of marvel, and yet it is believed. Venus also, whom they call Aphrodite, was born, they believe, from the foam of the sea, as indeed the composition of her name shews. They affirm that Castor and Pollux were born from an egg, and the Myrmidons from ants. And there are a thousand other things which, though contrary to the nature of things, yet seem credible to them, such as the stones thrown by Deucalion and Pyrrha and the crop of men which

sprang from them. And although they believe these and so many other strange myths, yet this one thing seems to them impossible, that a young woman should conceive a divine offspring, with no defilement from man, but by the breath of God. Yet if indeed they are so incredulous, they ought never to have given credence to such a number of unseemly prodigies. If, however, they do believe them, they should much more readily accept these beliefs of ours which are so honourable and so sacred than those which are so unworthy and so vile.

12. Yet perhaps they may say, Since it was possible to God that a virgin should conceive, it was possible also that she should bring forth. They consider, however, that it is unfitting that so great majesty should come into the world through the womb of a woman, because, even though there had been no pollution from intercourse with man, there was yet the indignity of profane handling in the actual delivery of the child. To this objection we would briefly reply in accordance with the sense of their remarks. If anyone were to see a child drowning in some deep swamp, and being a strong and powerful man should go to the extreme edge, so to speak, of the swamp, in order to rescue the dying child, would you accuse this man of being defiled because he had stepped a little into the mud, or would you not rather praise him for his kindness in giving back life to one who was dying? But we are here speaking of an ordinary man. Let us consider once again the nature of Him who was born. How far inferior do you think is the nature of the sun to Him? How far, without doubt, the creature to the Creator? Observe now whether when a ray of sunshine falls upon some pool of

mud it receives any taint of defilement from it? Or does the sun take any harm by shining upon foul objects? How far inferior also is fire in its nature to those things which we have been discussing. Yet no substance, however foul or bad, is believed to pollute fire by contact with it. And since this is so plainly the case in material things, do you suppose that any pollution or defilement can attach to that transcendent and incorporeal nature, which is above all fire and all light? And lastly, consider also this fact. We say that man was fashioned by God out of clay from the earth. But if God is accused of defilement in rescuing His own work, much more must He be reproached for having made that work in the beginning. And it is needless to give reasons why He should pass through what is repulsive, when you cannot explain why He made what so repels. Hence it is not nature but custom which has taught us that these things are repellent. For indeed all the parts of the body, being formed from one and the same clay, differ from one another only in their use and offices.

13. There is, however, another matter which we must not omit in the solution of this question, namely, that the substance of God, which is wholly incorporeal, cannot be introduced into bodies or received by them at all, unless there be some intermediate spiritual substance, which is capable of receiving the Divine spirit. For example, light is able, we may say, to illuminate all the members of the body, yet by none of them can it be received except only by the eye. For the eye alone is receptive of light. And thus the Son of God is born of a virgin, not merely associated with flesh alone, but begotten with a soul which is intermediate between

the flesh and God. Thus with the soul as intermediate, and receiving the Word of God within the secret citadel of the rational spirit, God was born of the Virgin without any dishonour such as you suppose. And therefore nothing is to be considered as degrading in which the sanctification of the Spirit was present, and where the soul, which could receive God, was made partaker also of flesh. And understand nothing as impossible where the Power of the Most High was present, nor have any thought of human weakness where there was the fulness of Divinity.

14. WAS CRUCIFIED UNDER PONTIUS PILATE AND WAS BURIED: HE DESCENDED INTO HELL. The Apostle Paul teaches us that we should have "the eyes of our understanding enlightened,"1 "that we may understand what is the height and breadth and depth."2 "The height and breadth and depth" is a description of the Cross. Thus the part which was fixed in the earth is called by him the depth; the height, that which was raised aloft, reaching upward from the earth; the breadth, that which was extended, spreading out to right and left. And since there are so many ways of dying by which men may depart this life, why does the Apostle wish that we should have our understanding enlightened but to know the reason for which the Cross was chosen in preference to them all for the death of the Saviour? Hence we are to understand that the Cross was a triumph. It was indeed a glorious trophy. Now a triumph is a sign of victory over an enemy. And Christ, when He came, brought three kingdoms at once under his sway. For this is what is meant by the saying, "That in

¹ Eph. i. 18. ² Ibia. iii. 18.

the name of Jesus every knee should bow, of things in heaven, and things in earth, and things under the earth." All these then, he conquered by His death. Wherefore a death was sought conformable to the mystery, that so, by being lifted up in the air, and subduing the powers of the air, He might obtain the victory over these supernal and celestial beings. The holy Prophet also says that all the day long his hands were stretched out to the people of the earth, that He might both testify to the unbelieving and invite the faithful, while by means of that part which is sunk under the earth He might subdue to Himself the kingdoms of the nether world.

15. Moreover, that we may briefly touch upon certain matters of more hidden meaning, when God in the beginning made the world, He appointed and set over it certain powers of celestial virtues, by whom the race of mortals might be governed and directed. That this was so done we are told by Moses in his Song in Deuteronomy, "When the Most High divided the nations, he appointed the bounds of the nations according to the number of the angels of God."3 But some of these, as indeed he who is called the Prince of this world, did not administer according to the laws by which they had received it the power entrusted to them by God, nor did they teach the human race to follow the divine precepts, but rather to render obedience to their perverse commands. And thus the bond of sins was drawn up against us, because, as the Prophet says, "We were sold under our sins." For every man receives the price of his soul when he gratifies

¹ Phil. ii. 10. ² Isa. lxv. 2. ³ Deut. xxxii. 8,

⁴ Isa. l. 1, cp. Rom. vii. 14.

his lust. Under that bond, therefore, was every man held by those most evil rulers. But when Christ came He tore down the bond, and thus stripped them of their power. And this also Paul signifies under a great mystery, when he says of Him, "Destroying the handwriting which was against us, and nailing it to his cross, he led away principalities and powers, triumphing over them in himself."1 Thus the rulers whom God had appointed over mankind became rebellious and tyrannical, even daring to attack those who had been committed to their charge, and to vanguish them utterly in the conflicts of sin. As also the Prophet Ezekiel declares in mystical language when he says, "In that day angels shall come forth hastening to destroy Ethiopia, and there shall be perturbation among them in the day of Egypt; for behold he comes."2 Having therefore stripped them of their almighty power, Christ is said to have triumphed, and to have restored to men the power which had been taken from them; as He Himself says to His disciples in the Gospel, "Behold I have given you power to tread upon serpents and scorpions, and upon all the might of the enemy."3 Thus by the Cross of Christ those who had wrongfully used the authority which they had received were made subject to those who had before been in subjection to them. But us, that is to say, mankind, it teaches first of all to fight against sin even unto death, and willingly to die in the cause of holiness. Further, in this same Cross we have set before us an example of obedience, even as it has inflicted upon those who were once our rulers the penalty of their rebellion. Hear, then, how the Apostle would teach us obedience:

¹ Col. ii. 14 f. ² Ez. xxx. 9. ³ Luke x. 19.

"Let this mind be in you, which was in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, thought it not robbery to be equal with God, but made himself of no reputation, taking upon him the form of a servant, being made in the likeness of men, and, being found in fashion as a man, he became obedient unto death, even the death of the cross." Since, therefore, He is the great Master who ever practised what He preached, He has taught us the obedience which good men should render even at the cost of death, by Himself first enduring death for His obedience.

16. But perhaps some one may be alarmed at teaching of this kind, and at our discussing the death of Him who but a short while since was said to be everlasting with the Father, begotten of His substance, and taught that He was one with God the Father in dominion, majesty and eternity. But do not, my faithful reader, be thus alarmed. In a little while you shall see Him of whose death you now learn once again immortal; for the death which He endures will spoil death. For the purpose of that mystery of the Incarnation which we have already expounded was that the Divine virtue might be concealed, as though it were a hook, beneath the form of human flesh, and, as the Apostle Paul has already said, "being found in fashion as a man" might lure the Prince of this world to engage in conflict, so that, by offering to him His flesh as a bait, the Divinity concealed within might secure him caught with a hook by the shedding of His immaculate blood. For He alone who knows no stain of sin has destroyed the sins of all, or at least of those who have marked the doorposts of their faith with His blood. As, therefore, when a

¹ Phil. ii. 5 ff.

fish seizes a baited hook, not only does it not remove the bait from the hook, but itself is drawn out of the water to be food for others, so also he who had the power of death seized the body of Jesus in death, not being aware that the Divinity lay hidden within like a hook. And having swallowed it, he was at once caught, and, the bars of hell being burst asunder, was drawn forth, as it were, from the deep that he might become food for others. That this should come to pass the Prophet Ezekiel long ago foretold under the same figure, saying, "I will draw thee out with my hook and stretch thee out upon the earth: the plains shall be filled with thee, and I will set all the fowls of the air over thee, and I will satiate all the beasts of the earth with thee."1 The Prophet David also says, "Thou hast broken the heads of the great dragon, thou hast given him to be meat to the people of Ethiopia."2 And Job witnesses of this same mystery in like manner, for he says, in the person of the Lord speaking to him, "Wilt thou draw forth the dragon with a hook, and wilt thou put thy bit in his nostrils?"3

17. It is therefore with no loss or disparagement of His Divine nature that Christ suffered in the flesh, but, in order that by the infirmity of the flesh He might achieve salvation, His Divine nature descended into death through the flesh. And this was done, not that He might be detained by death according to the law of mortality, but that He might Himself at His resurrection open the gates of death. Just as if a king were to go to a prison, and when he had gone in, should open the doors, and break in pieces the chains and locks and bolts, and should then lead forth and set at liberty the prisoners,

¹ Ez. xxxii. 3 f. ² Ps. lxxiv. 14, Sept. ³ Job xli. 1.

and restore to light and life those who were sitting in darkness and the shadow of death. Thus indeed the king is said to have been in prison, but not under the same condition as the prisoners themselves. They were in prison to be punished he to release from punishment.

- 18. Those who have handed down the Creed to us have most carefully specified the time at which these things were done, namely, "under Pontius Pilate," so that the tradition of these things should never in any respect vary, as though being vague or uncertain. Yet it should be known that the Creed of the Roman Church does not include the words "He descended into Hell," nor is this clause found in the Churches of the East. The meaning of the phrase, however seems to be the same as that of the words "He was buried." But in that great love and zeal for the Scriptures which pos sesses you, you will say, no doubt, that these things ough to be proved by more evident warrant of Divine Scripture For the greater are the things to be believed, the more de they need sufficient and undoubted witness. Such a con tention is both right and just. But we, as speaking to those who know the law, have for the sake of brevity, left unmen tioned a veritable forest of testimonies. Yet we will quote if it is so required of us, a few out of the many, knowing indeed, that to all who study the Divine Scriptures a vas sea of testimonies lies open.
- rg. In the first place, therefore, we must know that the meaning of the Cross is not one and the same for all. For the Gentiles hold to one opinion, the Jews to another, and the faithful to another. As also the Apostle says, "We preach Christ crucified, to the Jews a stumbling-block, to

the Gentiles foolishness, but to those who are called, both Jews and Greeks, Christ, the power of God and the wisdom of God." Again, in the same place he says, "For the preaching of the Cross is to those who are perishing foolishness, but to those who are being saved," that is, to us, it is "the power of God." The Jews, to whom it had been delivered by the Law that Christ should abide for ever, were offended by His Cross, inasmuch as they were unwilling to believe His resurrection. To the Gentiles it seemed foolishness that God should have endured death, because they were ignorant of the mystery of the Incarnation. But the faithful, who had accepted His birth and passion in the flesh and His resurrection from the dead, believed rightly that it was the power of God which had overcome death.

First, then, you must hear how this very thing is declared in the words of prophecy by Isaiah, shewing that it was not the Jews, to whom the Prophets had foretold these things, who would believe, but those who had never heard them from the Prophets. For he says, "They to whom he was not spoken of shall see, and they that have not heard shall understand." Moreover, that while those who had meditated upon the law from childhood to old age would not believe, to the Gentiles every mystery should be transferred, this same Isaiah foretells in these words, "And the Lord of Hosts shall make a feast on this mountain unto all nations: they shall drink joy, they shall drink wine, they shall be anointed with ointment on this mountain. Deliver all these things to the nations." This was the counsel of the

¹ I Cor. i. 23 f. ² Ibid. 18.

³ Isa. lii. 15, cp. Rom. xv. 21. ⁴ Isa. xxv. 6.

Almighty with regard to all the nations. Those, however, who boast of their knowledge of the Law will perhaps say to us, 'You blaspheme in saying that the Lord was subjected to the corruption of death and the suffering of the Cross.' Read, then, what you find written in the Lamentations of Jeremiah, where it is said, "The Spirit of our countenance, Christ the Lord, was taken in our corruption, of whom we said, we shall live under his shadow among the nations." You hear how the Prophet says that Christ the Lord was taken, and for us, that is, for our sins, was delivered to corruption. And under His shadow, since the people of the Jews have continued in their unbelief, the Gentiles, he says, rest, seeing that we live not in Israel, but among the Gentiles.

20. If, however, it is not wearisome to you, we will describe as briefly as possible each particular detail in the Gospel story as it has been foretold by the Prophets, that those who are learning the first elements of the faith may have these testimonies written in their hearts, so that no conflicting doubt as to the things which they believe may at any time come upon them. We are told in the Gospel that Judas, one of Christ's friends and companions at table, betrayed Him. Hear how this is foretold in the Psalms, "He that hath eaten my bread hath lifted up his heel against me"; and in another place, "My friends and my neighbours drew near and set themselves against me"; and again, "His words were made softer than oil and yet be they very daggers." Would you hear how his words were made soft? "Judas came to Jesus and said unto him, Hail, master, and

¹ Lam. iv. 20. ² Ps. xli. 9. ³ Ps. xxxv. 15. ⁴ Ps. lv. 21.

kissed him."1 Thus by the tender endearment of a kiss he stabbed Him with the infamous dagger of betraval. Wherefore the Lord said to Him, " Judas, betrayest thou the Son of Man with a kiss?"2 He was valued, so you read, by the covetousness of the traitor at thirty pieces of silver. Hear the words of the Prophet concerning this also, "And I said unto them, If ye think good, give me my price, or if not, forbear"; and again, "I received from them," he says, "thirty pieces of silver, and I cast them into the house of the Lord, into the foundry."3 Is not this what is written in the Gospels, that Judas, "repenting of that which he had done, brought back the money and threw it down in the temple and departed"? 4 With good reason did He call it his price, as though in blame and reproach. For indeed He had done so many good works among them: He had given sight to their blind, feet to the lame, making the palsied to walk, and restoring life to the dead. Thus for all these good works they gave Him death as His price, computed at thirty pieces of silver. It is also told us in the Gospels that He was bound. This too the word of prophecy foretold by Isaiah saying, "Woe unto their soul, who have devised a most evil device against themselves, saying, Let us bind the just one, seeing that he is unprofitable to us."5

21. But someone will say, Are we indeed to understand these things of the Lord? Could the Lord be held prisoner by men and dragged to judgement? Of this also the same Prophet shall convince you: for he says thus, "The Lord himself shall come into judgement with the elders and rulers

¹ Matt. xxvi. 49. ² Luke xxii. 48. ³ Zech. xi. 12 f.

⁴ Matt. xxvii. 3, 5. 5 Isa. iii. 9.

of the people." The Lord, then, according to the witness of the Prophet, is judged, and not only judged, but scourged, and smitten on the face with the palms of men's hands, and spat upon, suffering every insult and indignity for our sake. And because these things when declared by the Apostles would fill all men with amazement, the Prophet, speaking in their person, exclaims, "Lord, who hath believed our report?"2 For it is incredible that God, the Son of God, should be spoken of and proclaimed as having suffered these things. And for this reason they are foretold by the Prophets, lest any doubt should arise in those who might believe. In His own person, therefore, Christ the Lord Himself says, "I gave my back to the scourges, and my cheeks to the palms of men's hands, I turned not away my face from shame and spitting."3 It is written also that among His other sufferings they bound Him and led Him to Pilate. This too the Prophet foretold, saying, "And they bound him and brought him as a token of friendship to King Jarim."4 Yet someone may object, But Pilate was not a king. Hear then what the Gospel next relates, "Pilate, hearing that he was from Galilee, sent him to Herod, who was king in Israel at that time."5 And rightly does the Prophet add the name "Jarim," which means a wild vine. For indeed Herod was not of the house of Israel, nor of that vine of Israel which the Lord had brought of Egypt, and planted "on a hill, a very fruitful place," but was a wild vine, namely, of an alien stock. He was therefore justly called "a wild vine," because he was in no wise sprung from the

¹ Isa. iii. 14.

² Isa. liii. I.

³ Isa. 1. 6.

⁴ Hos. x. 6.

^B Luke xxiii. 6 f.

⁶ Isa. v. I.

shoots of the vine of Israel. Again, the use of the words "pledge of friendship" by the Prophet is fitting and appropriate. For at that time Herod and Pilate, as the Gospel witnesses, "of enemies were made friends," and, as though in token of their reconciliation, each bound Jesus and sent Him to the other. But what mattered that if only Jesus could reconcile those at variance, restore peace, and bring back harmony? Whence it is written of this also in the Book of Job, "May the Lord reconcile the hearts of the princes of the earth."2

22. Again, we are told that when Pilate would fain have released Him, all the people cried out, "Crucify him, crucify him."3 This also the Prophet Jeremiah predicts, saying in the person of the Lord Himself, "My inheritance is become to me as a lion in the forest. He hath uttered his voice against me, wherefore I have hated it. And therefore," he says, "I have forsaken my house." And in another place he says, "Against whom have ye opened your mouth, and against whom have ye let loose your tongues?"5 When He stood before His judge, it is written that "He held His peace." Many Scriptures testify of this. In the Psalms it is written, "I became as a man that heareth not, and in whose mouth are no reproofs." And again, "I was as a deaf man and heard not, and as one that is dumb and openeth not his mouth."7 And again another Prophet says, "As a lamb before her shearers, so he opened not his mouth. In his humiliation his judgement was taken away." It is

¹ Luke xxiii. 12.

² Job xii. 24.

³ Luke xxiii. 21.

⁴ Jer. xii. 7 f.

⁵ Isa. lvii. 4.

⁶ Matt. xxvi. 63.

⁷ Ps. xxxviii. 13 f.

⁸ Isa. liii. 7 f.

written that there was put on Him a crown of thorns. Hear then what is said concerning this in the Song of Songs, where God the Father, marvelling at the iniquity of Jerusalem in the insult done to His Son, utters these words, "Go forth and see, ye daughters of Terusalem, the crown wherewith his mother hath crowned him." And of the thorns also another Prophet makes mention, "I looked that she should bring forth grapes, and she brought forth thorns, and instead of righteousness a cry."2 But that you may know the secrets of the mystery, it was fitting that He who came to take away the sins of the world should set free from its curse the earth, which, by the sin of the first man, had received the sentence of transgression, the Lord saying, "Cursed be the earth in thy labours: thorns and thistles shall it bring forth to thee."3 For this cause, therefore, is Jesus crowned with thorns, that thereby might be remitted that first sentence of condemnation. He was led to the Cross, and upon the wood of that Cross the life of the whole world was hung. Do you wish that this also should be confirmed by the testimony of the Prophets? Listen then to Jeremiah as he speaks of it, "Come and let us cast wood into his bread, and crush him out of the land of the living."4 And again, Moses, mourning over his people, says, "Thy life shall be suspended before thine eyes, and thou shalt fear day and night, and shalt not believe thy life."5 But we must pass on, for already we are exceeding that measure of brevity which we proposed, and have extended our "short word" by a lengthy dissertation. Yet we will add a few

¹ Cant. iii. 11. ² Isa. v. 4, 7. ³ Gen. iii. 17 f.

⁴ Jer. xi. 19. 6 Deut. xxviii. 66.

words more that we may not seem to have failed completely in our purpose.

23. It is written that when the side of Jesus was pierced, He poured thereout blood and water.1 Now this has a mystical meaning. For He Himself had said. "Out of his belly shall flow rivers of living water."2 But He also shed forth blood, which the Jews prayed might be upon themselves and upon their children. Thus He shed forth water which might wash believers, and He shed forth blood which might condemn unbelievers. Yet this may also be understood as prefiguring the twofold grace of baptism; first, that which is given by the baptism of water; secondly, that which is sought in martyrdom through the outpouring of blood, for both are called baptism. But if you ask further why our Lord is said to have poured forth blood and water from His side rather than from any other member, I suppose that by the side with its ribs the woman is signified. For since the fountain of sin and death proceeded from the first woman, who was the rib of the first Adam, the fountain of redemption and life is drawn from the rib of the second Adam.

24. It is written that at His Passion there was darkness over the earth from the sixth until the ninth hour. Hear the witness of the Prophet to this also, "Thy sun shall go down at midday." Again, the Prophet Zechariah says, "In that day there shall be no more light. There shall be cold and frost in one day, and that day known to the Lord; and it shall be neither day nor night, but at evening time there shall be light."

¹ John xix. 34. ² John vii. 38. ³ Amos viii. 9.

What plainer language could the Prophet have used that his words might seem not so much a prophecy of the future as a record of the past? He foretold, indeed, both cold and frost. For it was because of the cold that Peter was warming himself: and he was suffering cold not only by reason of the time of day, but also because of his faith. It is also said, "and that day shall be known to the Lord, and it shall be neither day nor night." What is meant by "neither day nor night"? Does he not plainly refer to the darkness which interrupted the day, and the light which was afterwards restored? It was not truly day, for it did not begin with sunrise, nor was it complete night, for at close of day it was neither granted its full duration from the beginning, nor allowed to bring to completion its appointed course, but the light which had been driven away by the crime of wicked men was restored at evening time. For after the ninth hour the darkness was driven away and the sun was restored to the world. Again, another Prophet bears witness of this also, saying, "The light shall be darkened upon the earth in the daytime."1

25. The Gospel story also relates that the soldiers parted the garments of Jesus among them, and cast lots upon His vesture. The Holy Spirit provided that this also should be foretold through the witness of the Prophets, for David says, "They parted my garments among them and upon my vesture they did cast lots." Nor are the Prophets silent as to the robe, that is to say, the scarlet robe which the soldiers are said to have put upon Him in mockery. Hear the words of Isaiah. "Who is this that cometh from Edom, the red-

¹ Amos viii. 9. ² Ps. xxii. 18.

ness of his garments from Bozrah? Wherefore are thy garments red, and thy raiment as though thou hadst trodden in the winepress?" To which He Himself replies, "I have trodden the winepress alone, O daughter of Zion." For He alone it is who hath not sinned, and hath taken away the sins of the world. For if by one man death could enter into the world, how much more by one man, who was God also, could life be restored!

26. We are told also that vinegar was given Him to drink, or wine mingled with myrrh, which is bitterer than gall. Hear what the Prophet has foretold concerning this: "They gave me gall to eat, and when I was thirsty they gave me vinegar to drink." In accordance with which, Moses, even in his day, could say to the people, "Their vine is of the vineyards of Sodom, and their branch of Gomorrah; their grape is a grape of gall, and their cluster a cluster of bitterness." And again, reproaching them, he says, "O foolish people and unwise, have ye thus requited the Lord?" Moreover in the Song of Songs the same things are foretold, where even the garden in which the Lord was crucified is indicated: "I have come into my garden, my sister, my spouse, and have gathered in my myrrh." Whereby is plainly signified the wine mingled with myrrh which was given to the Lord to drink.

27. It is written that after this He gave up the ghost.⁶ This also had been foretold by the Prophet, who says, addressing the Father in the Person of the Son, "Into thy hands I commend my Spirit." It is related also that He

¹ Isa, lxiii, 1 ff. ² Ps. lxix, 21,

³ Deut. xxxii. 32.

⁴ Ibid. 6.

⁵ Cant. v. 1. ⁶ Marc. xv. 37.

⁷ Ps. xxxi. 5.

was buried, and that a great stone was laid at the door of the sepulchre. Hear what the word of prophecy has foretold by Jeremiah concerning this also. "They have cut off my life in the pit and have laid a stone upon me." These words of the Prophet point most clearly to His burial. There are yet others. "The righteous hath been taken away from beholding iniquity and his place is in peace." And elsewhere, "I will give the malignant for his burial" and yet again, "He hath lain down and slept as a lion and as a lion's whelp; who shall rouse him up?"

28. That He descended into hell is also plainly foretold in the Psalms, where it is said, "Thou hast brought me also into the dust of death."5 And again, "What profit is there in my blood, when I shall have descended into corruption?"6 And again, "I descended into the deep mire, where no ground is."7 Moreover, John says, "Art thou He that shall come" (into hell, without doubt), "or do we look for another?"8 And thus Peter also says, that "Christ being put to death in the flesh, but quickened in the Spirit which dwells in Him, descended to the spirits who were shut up in prison, who in the days of Noah believed not, to preach unto them":9 where also the work that He did in hell is declared. But the Lord Himself says by the Prophet, as though speaking of the future, "Thou wilt not leave my soul in hell, neither wilt thou suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."10 And this again, in prophetic language he speaks of as already fulfilled, "O Lord, thou hast brought my soul out

Lam. iii. 53.
 Isa. lvii. I f.
 Isa. liii. 9.
 Gen. xlix. 9.
 Ps. xxii. 15.
 Ps. xxx. 9.
 Ps. lxix. 2.
 Matt. xi. 3.
 Isa. liii. 9.
 Ps. xxx. 9.
 Pt. iii. 18 ff.

¹⁰ Ps. xvi. 10.

of hell; thou hast saved me from them that go down into the pit." There next follows:—

29. "THE THIRD DAY HE ROSE FROM THE DEAD." The glory, indeed, of Christ's resurrection shed a radiance upon everything which before had seemed weak and feeble. but a moment since you thought it impossible that an immortal Being could die, see now how He who has overcome death and has risen again cannot be called mortal. Yet in this you must understand the goodness of the Creator; for as far as you by your sins have cast yourself down, so far has He descended in following you. And do not impute lack of power to God, the Creator of all things, by imagining that His work could have come suddenly to an end, so that He who was to achieve our salvation could proceed no further. We speak of infernal and supernal because we are confined within the fixed limits of the body, and are held fast within the bounds of that space which is allotted to us. But to God, who is present everywhere and absent nowhere, what is infernal or what supernal? And yet by the assumption of a body even these have their place. The flesh, which had been laid in the sepulchre, was raised, that the words of the Prophet might be fulfilled, "Thou wilt not suffer thy Holy One to see corruption."2 He returned, therefore, a victor from the dead, bringing with him the spoils of hell. For He led forth those who were held in captivity by death, as He Himself had foretold, saying, "When I shall be lifted up from the earth I shall draw all things unto me."3 To this the Gospel bears witness, when it says, "The graves were opened, and many bodies of saints which slept arose, and

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¹ Ps. xxx. 3. · ² Ps. xvi. 10. ³ John xii. 32.

appeared unto many, and entered into the holy city,"1 that city, doubtless, of which the Apostle says, "Terusalem which is above is free, which is the mother of us all."2 As also he says again to the Hebrews, "It became him, for whom are all things, and by whom are all things, who had brought many sons unto glory, to make the author of their salvation perfect through suffering."3 And thus, taking his seat at the right hand of God in the highest heaven, He placed there that human flesh, made perfect through sufferings, which had fallen under the power of death by the lapse of the first man, but was now restored by the virtue of the resurrection. Whence also the Apostle says, "Who hath raised us up together and made us sit together in the heavenly places."4 For He was the potter, who, as the Prophet Jeremiah teaches us, "took up again with his hands and formed anew, as it seemed good to him, the vessel which had fallen from his hands and was broken in pieces."5 And so it seemed good to Him that this mortal and corruptible body which He had assumed, having been raised from the rocky sepulchre and rendered immortal and incorruptible, He should now place not on earth but in heaven, at the right hand of His Father. The Scriptures of the Old Testament are full of these mysteries. No Prophet, no Lawgiver, no Psalmist is silent, but almost every sacred page speaks of them. It seems unnecessary, therefore, to waste time in collecting testimonies; yet we will quote a few of them, referring those who still thirst for more to the fountain-head of the divine volumes themselves.

¹ Matt. xxvii. 52. ² Gal. iv. 26. ³ Hebr. ii. 10.

⁴ Eph. ii. 6. ⁵ Jer. xviii. 4.

30. Thus in the Psalms it is said, "I laid me down and slept, and rose up again, for the Lord sustained me." Again, in another place, "Because of the misery of the needy and the sighing of the poor, now will I arise, saith the Lord."2 Or again, as we have already said, "O Lord, thou hast brought my soul out of hell; thou hast saved me from them that go down into the pit."3 And in yet another place, "Because thou hast turned and quickened me, and brought me out of the deep of the earth again."4 In the eightyseventh Psalm He is most clearly referred to: "He became as a man without help, free among the dead."5 It is not said "a man," but "as a man." For in that He descended into hell, He was "as a man": but He was "free among the dead," because He could not be held by death. And thus in the one nature the power of human weakness, in the other the power of divine majesty is made manifest. The Prophet Hosea also speaks most clearly of the third day, in these words, "After two days He will heal us; but on the third day we shall rise again, and shall live in his presence."6 This he says, speaking in the person of those who, by rising with Him on the third day, are recalled from death to life. And these are the same who say, "On the third day we shall rise again, and shall live in his presence." But Isaiah says plainly, "Who brought forth from the earth the great shepherd of the sheep."7 And further, that women were to witness His resurrection, while Scribes, and Pharisees, and people disbelieved, this also Isaiah foretold in these words,

¹ Ps. iii. 5.

³ Ps. xii. 5.

³ Ps. xxx. 3.

⁴ Ps. lxxi. 20.

⁵ Ps. lxxxviii. 5, E.V. ⁶ Hos. vi. 2.

⁷ Isa. lxiii. 11.

"Ye women, who come from beholding, come: for it is a people that hath no understanding." But even with regard to the women who are said to have gone to the sepulchre after the resurrection, and to have sought Him, without finding, as Mary Magdalene, who, we are told, came to the sepulchre before it was light, and when she did not find Him, said, weeping, to the angels who were there, "They have taken away the Lord, and I know not where they have laid him ";2 it is thus prophesied in the Song of Songs: "On my bed I sought him whom my soul loveth; I sought him in the night, and found him not."3 And of those who found Him, and held Him by the feet, it is also foretold in the same book, "I will hold him whom my soul loveth, and will not let him go."4 These, meanwhile, are a few of many passages, since, in our desire for brevity, we are not able to accumulate more.

31. HE ASCENDED INTO HEAVEN, AND SITTETH ON THE RIGHT HAND OF THE FATHER: FROM THENCE HE SHALL COME TO JUDGE THE QUICK AND THE DEAD. These words occur with fitting brevity at the end of this section. As said, they are plain enough, but the question is, in what sense are they to be understood? For to "ascend," and to "sit," and to "come," unless you understand such expressions in accordance with the dignity of the Divine nature, seem to imply a certain degree of human weakness. For when He had accomplished what He had to do here upon earth, and had recalled the souls of men from the captivity of hell, He is spoken of as ascending up to heaven, as the Prophet had foretold, "Ascending up on high he led captivity captive,

¹ Isa. xxvii. 11. ² John xx. 13. ³ Cant. iii. 1. ⁴ Ibid. 4.

and gave gifts unto men."1 These indeed were the gifts which Peter spoke of in the Acts of the Apostles in connection with the Holy Ghost: "Being therefore by the right hand of God exalted He hath shed forth this gift which ye do see and hear."2 And thus the gift of the Holy Ghost was given by Him to men, because that captivity which the devil had before carried down into hell through sin, Christ by His resurrection from death recalled to heaven. He ascended therefore into heaven, not where God the Word had not been before, for He was always in heaven and abiding with the Father, but where the Word made flesh had not before been seated. And lastly, since this entrance within the gates of heaven seemed new to its ministers and princes, they call to one another, as they see the fleshly nature enter the innermost recesses of heaven, saying, as David, full of the Holy Ghost, declares, "Lift up your gates, ye princes, and be ye lift up ye everlasting gates, and the King of glory shall enter in. Who is the King of glory? The Lord strong and mighty, the Lord mighty in battle."3 Now these words are spoken not with regard to the power of the Divinity, but in reference to this new and strange thing, that flesh should ascend to the right hand of God. In another place also this same David says, "God hath ascended jubilantly, and the Lord with the sound of the trumpet."4 And indeed it is the custom for conquerors to return from battle with the sound of the trumpet. Of the Lord Himself also it is said, "Who buildeth up his ascent in heaven."5 And again, elsewhere,

¹ Ps. lxviii. 18, cp. Eph. iv. 8.

² Acts ii. 33. ³ Ps. xxiii. 9 f. 4 Ps. xlvii. 5.

⁵ Amos ix. 6, cp. Ps. lxxix. 2.

"Who hath ascended above the cherubim, flying upon the wings of the winds."1

32. Now to sit at the right hand of the Father is a mystery which pertains to the assumption of flesh. For it does not befit that incorporeal nature apart from the assumption of flesh; nor is a heavenly seat required to perfect the Divine nature, but the human. And thus it is said of Him, "Thy seat, O God, is prepared from henceforth; thou art from everlasting."2 The seat, then, upon which the Lord Jesus was to sit, was prepared from everlasting, that in His name " every knee should bow, of things in heaven and things on earth, and things under the earth; and every tongue should confess to him that Jesus is Lord, in the glory of God the Father."3 And of Him David also speaks, in these words, "The Lord said unto my Lord, sit thou on my right hand until I make thine enemies thy footstool."4 But with regard to this saving the Lord in the Gospel disputes with the Pharisees, "If therefore David in spirit calleth him Lord. how is he his son?"5 For by this means He showed that, according to the spirit, He was the Lord, according to the flesh, the Son of David. And therefore the Lord Himself says in another place, "Verily I say unto you, henceforth ye shall see the Son of Man sitting at the right hand of the power of God."6 And thus the Apostle Peter says of Christ, "Who is on the right hand of God, seated in the heavens." Paul also, writing to the Ephesians, says, "According to the working of the might of his power, which he wrought in

¹ Ps. xviii. 10.

² Ps. xciii. 2.

³ Phil. ii. 10 f.

⁴ Ps. cx. 1. 7 1 Pet. iii. 22.

⁵ Matt. xxii. 43 ff. 6 Matt. xxvi. 64.

Christ, when he raised him from the dead, and seated him on his right hand."1

- 33. Moreover, that He shall come to judge the quick and dead we are taught by many testimonies of the divine Scriptures. But before we quote what the Prophets have foretold concerning these things, we think it is necessary to remind you that this doctrine of the faith would have us ever watchful from day to day for the coming of the Judge, that we may so frame our conduct as being ready to give an account to the Judge who awaits us. For this is what the Prophet said of the man who is blessed, that "he ordereth his words in judgement."2 Now when it is said that He shall come to judge the quick and the dead, this does not mean that some will come to judgement who are still alive, and others who are dead, but that He will judge both souls and bodies, referring to our souls as "the quick," and to our bodies as "the dead"; as also the Lord Himself says in the Gospel, "Fear not them who are able to kill the body, but are not able to hurt the soul; but rather fear him who is able to destroy both soul and body in Gehennah."3
- 34. We would now, if you are willing, shew briefly that these things were foretold by the Prophets. Further testimonies, however, you will yourself, since you are so minded, collect from the wide range of Scripture. Thus the Prophet Malachi says, "Behold the Lord Almighty shall come, and who shall abide the day of his coming, or who shall abide the sight of him? For he doth come as the fire of a furnace and as fuller's soap: and he shall sit, refining and purifying as it were gold and silver." But that you may know the

¹ Eph. i. 19 f. ² Ps. cxii. 5. ⁸ Matt. x. 28. ⁴ Mal, iii. 1 ff.

more clearly who this Lord is of whom these things are said, hear also what the Prophet Daniel foretells: "I saw," saith he, "in the vision of the night, and, behold, one like the Son of Man coming with the clouds of heaven, and he came nigh to the Ancient of days, and was brought near before him; and there was given to him dominion, and honour, and a kingdom. And all peoples, tribes, and languages shall serve him. And his dominion is an everlasting dominion which shall not pass away, and his kingdom shall not be destroyed."1 From these words we learn not only of His coming and judgement, but also of His dominion and kingdom, that His dominion is everlasting, and His kingdom incorruptible and without end: as it is said in the Creed, "and of His kingdom there shall be no end." Thus any one who says that the kingdom of Christ shall one day come to an end is very far from the faith. Yet we ought to know that the enemy endeavours to counterfeit this saving advent of Christ with cunning craftiness in order to deceive the faithful. And so in place of the Son of Man, who is looked for as coming in the majesty of His Father, he prepares the Son of Perdition with prodigies and lying signs, that instead of Christ he may introduce Antichrist into the world; of whom the Lord Himself warned the Jews, saying in the Gospels, "Because I am come in my Father's name, and ye received me not, another will come in his own name, and him ye will receive."2 And again, He says, "When ye shall see the abomination of desolation, spoken of by Daniel the Prophet, standing in the holy place: let him that readeth understand."3 Daniel, therefore, in his visions speaks with great fulness of the

¹ Dan. vii. 13 f. ² John v. 43. ³ Matt. xxiv. 15.

coming of that delusion, but it would be tedious to quote further instances, for we have already discussed the subject at sufficient length; we would thus refer any one who may wish to know more concerning these matters to the visions themselves. But the Apostle also says, "Let no man deceive you by any means: for that day shall not come, except there come a falling away first, and the man of sin be revealed, the son of perdition; who opposeth and exalteth himself above everything that is called God, or that is worshipped; so that he sitteth in the temple of God, shewing himself as though himself were God." And a few words later, "Then shall that wicked one be revealed, whom the Lord Jesus shall slay with the breath of his mouth, and shall destroy with the brightness of his coming: whose coming is after the working of Satan with all power and signs and lying wonders."2 And again, shortly afterwards he says, "And therefore the Lord shall send unto them strong delusion, that they may believe a lie, that all may be judged who have not believed the truth."3 For this reason, therefore, are we forewarned of this delusion by the words of Prophets, Evangelists, and Apostles, that so no one may mistake the coming of Antichrist for the coming of Christ. But as the Lord Himself says, "When they shall say unto you, lo, here is Christ, or lo, he is there, believe it not. For many false Christs and false prophets shall come and shall seduce many."4 But let us see how He describes the judgement of the true Christ: "As the lightning shineth from the east unto the west, so shall the coming of the Son of Man be."5 When, therefore,

¹ 2 Thess. ii. 3 f. ² Ibid. 8 f. ³ Ibid. 11 f.

⁴ Matt. xxiv. 23 f. 5 Ibid. 27.

the true Lord Jesus Christ shall come, He will sit and determine judgement. For so also He says in the Gospels, "He shall separate the sheep from the goats," that is, the righteous from the unrighteous; as the Apostle says, "We must all stand before the judgement seat of Christ, that every man may receive the awards due to the body, according as he hath done, whether they be good or evil." But we shall be judged not only for our deeds, but also for our thoughts, as the same Apostle says, "Their thoughts mutually accusing or else excusing one another, in the day when God shall judge the secrets of men." But of this enough has now been said. There next follows in the order of faith,

35. AND IN THE HOLY GHOST. Those matters which we have now recorded at some length with reference to Christ are concerned with the mystery of His Incarnation and Passion. The intervention of this discussion, as being connected with His Person, has somewhat delayed the mention of the Holy Spirit. But yet, if the Divine nature alone is to be considered, then just as at the beginning of the Creed we say "I believe in God the Father Almighty," and afterwards, "In Jesus Christ, His only Son, our Lord," so in the same manner we go on to say "And in the Holy Ghost." Now all those things which have already been asserted with regard to Christ are related, as we have said, to the dispensation of the flesh. And therefore by the mention of the Holy Spirit the mystery of the Trinity is completed. For as one Father is mentioned, and there is no other Father, and one only-begotten Son is mentioned, and there is no other onlybegotten Son, so also there is one Holy Ghost, and there

¹ Matt. xxv. 32. ² 2 Cor. v. 10. ³ Rom. ii. 15 f.

cannot be another Holy Ghost. Thus in order that the Persons may be distinguished, the terms which express relationship are varied, and so by the first is understood the Father, of whom are all things, who Himself also has no Father, by the second the Son, as being born of the Father, and by the third the Holy Ghost, as proceeding from the mouth of God, and sanctifying all things. And further, that in the Trinity one and the same Godhead may be affirmed, just as we declare our belief "in God the Father," so also we say, "in Christ His Son," and so also "in the Holy Ghost." But our meaning will be made plainer by what follows. For after this clause the next words are,

36. "THE HOLY CHURCH; THE FORGIVENESS OF SINS, THE RESURRECTION OF THIS FLESH." It does not say "In the Holy Church," nor "In the forgiveness of sins," nor "In the resurrection of the flesh," For if the preposition "in" had been added it would have had the same meaning as in the preceding articles. Whereas, although in those clauses where faith as concerning the Godhead is declared, we say, "In God the Father," and "In Jesus Christ, His Son," and "In the Holy Ghost," yet in the rest, where we speak not of the Godhead but of creatures and mysteries, the preposition "in" is not added. And so we do not say "We believe in the Holy Church," but "We believe the Holy Church," not as God, but as the Church gathered together to God. So also that there is "forgiveness of sins"; we do not say "We believe in the forgiveness of sins." And so too we believe that there will be a "resurrection of the flesh"; we do not say "We believe in the resurrection of the flesh." Thus by means of this preposition of one syllable the Creator

is distinguished from the creature, and things Divine are separated from things human.

Such then is the Holy Ghost, who in the Old Testament inspired the Law and the Prophets, and in the New the Gospels and the writings of the Apostles. And therefore the Apostle says, "All scripture given by inspiration of God is profitable for instruction." Hence it seems proper here to set forth in their order, as we have received them from the records of the Fathers, the books of the Old and New Testaments, which, according to the tradition of our forefathers, are believed to have been inspired by the Holy Ghost, and delivered to the Churches of Christ.

37. And so of the Old Testament, first of all, there have been handed down the five Books of Moses, Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy; then Joshua, the son of Nun, and the Book of Judges together with Ruth; then four Books of Kings, which the Hebrews count as two; the Book of Omissions, which is called the Book of Days, and two Books of Ezra, which the Hebrews reckon as one, and Esther. Of the Prophets there are Isaiah, Jeremiah, Ezekiel, and Daniel, and also one book of the Twelve Prophets. Job and the Psalms of David are each one book. Solomon has given three books to the Churches, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Canticles. With these last the number of the books of the Old Testament is completed.

In the New Testament there are four Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, John; the Acts of the Apostles, written by Luke; fourteen Epistles of the Apostle Paul, two of the Apostle Peter, one of James, brother of the Lord, and Apostle,

^{1 2} Tim. iii. 16.

one of Jude, three of John, and the Apocalypse of John.

These are the books which the Fathers have included within the Canon, and by which they would have us confirm the declaration of our faith.

38. It should be known, however, that there are also other books which our fathers call not "Canonical," but "Ecclesiastical"; namely, Wisdom, which is called the Wisdom of Solomon, and another Wisdom, called the Wisdom of the Son of Sirach, which among the Latins is called by the general title Ecclesiasticus, by which name not the author of the book but the character of the writing is designated. To the same class belong the Book of Tobit, the Book of Judith, and the Books of the Maccabees. In the New Testament there is the little book which is called the Pastor or Hermes, and that which is called the Two Ways, or the Judgement of Peter. All these they desire should be read in the Churches, but not cited as authority for matters of faith. The other writings they have named "Apocrypha," and will not have them read in the Churches.

Such are the traditions which have been handed down to us from the Fathers, and which, as I have said, I have thought it fitting here to set forth, for the instruction of those who are learning the first elements of the Church and of the Faith, that they may know what are the fountains of the Word of God from which they should drink.

39. The order of belief next gives the words "THE HOLY CHURCH." We have already mentioned why we do not say here also "In the Holy Church." Those therefore who have already been taught to believe in one God, under the

mystery of the Trinity, must believe this also, that there is one holy Church, in which there is one faith and one baptism, in which is believed one God the Father, and one Lord Jesus Christ, His Son, and one Holy Ghost. This is that holy Church which is without spot or wrinkle. For indeed many others have gathered together Churches, as Marcion, and Valentinus, and Ebion, and Manichæus, and Arius, and all the other heretics. But those Churches are not without spot or wrinkle of deceitfulness. And thus the Prophet says of them, "I hate the Church of the malicious, and I will not sit with the ungodly." But of that Church which keeps the faith entire, hear what the Holy Spirit says in the Song of Songs, "My dove is one; the perfect one of her mother is one."2 He therefore who receives this faith in the Church must not turn aside to the council of vanity, nor enter in with those who work iniquity.

For a council of vanity is the declaration of Marcion, who denied that the Father of Christ is God the Creator, who through His Son made the world. A council of vanity is that which Ebion taught, that we ought so to believe in Christ that we may continue to observe the circumcision of the flesh, the keeping of the Sabbath, the rites of sacrifice, and all the other ordinances which are according to the letter of the Law. A council of vanity is the teaching of Manichæus, first because he calls himself the Paraclete, and also because he says that the world was made by an evil God, denies God the Creator, rejects the Old Testament, asserts that there are two principles, one good, the other evil, being mutually opposed to one another; he maintains further that

¹ Ps. xxvi. 5. ² Cant. vi. 9.

the souls of men are co-eternal with God, and that, as the Pythagoreans believe, they return through various cycles of birth into cattle and animals and beasts; he denies also the resurrection of our flesh, and affirms that the birth and passion of the Lord did not take place actually in the flesh, but only in appearance. A council of vanity is the doctrine which Paul of Samosata and his successor Photinus taught, that Christ was born of the Father before the world, but had His beginning from Mary, thus maintaining not that being God He was born man, but that of man He was made God. A council of vanity is the teaching of Arius and Eunomius, who consider that the Son of God was not born of the very substance of the Father, but was created out of nothing, and that the Son of God had a beginning, and is inferior to the Father; who likewise affirm that the Holy Spirit is not only inferior to the Son, but is also a ministering spirit. A council of vanity is the assertion of those who confess indeed that the Son is of the substance of the Father, but separate and distinguish the Holy Spirit, although the Saviour shews in the Gospel that the power and the Godhead of the Trinity are one and the same, saying, "Baptize all nations in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost."1 And therefore it is clearly an impiety for man to put asunder what God has joined together. A council of vanity is that which an obstinate and depraved contention assembled by affirming that although Christ assumed human flesh, He did not also take a rational soul: for indeed Christ conferred one and the same salvation on the flesh, the soul, the intellect, and the reason of man. A council of vanity is

¹ Matt. xxviii. 19.

that which Donatus gathered together throughout Africa, by accusing the Church of treachery, and that with which Novatus caused a disturbance by refusing repentance to the lapsed, and condemning second marriages, even though, perhaps, they had been contracted of necessity. All these, therefore, you will avoid as the congregations of the malicious. Those also, if such there be, who are said to assert that the Son of God does not see or know the Father, as He Himself is known and seen by the Father; or that the kingdom of Christ will have an end; or that the flesh at the resurrection will not be completely restored to its original substance; those also who deny that there will be a just judgement of God upon all men, and affirm that the devil will be absolved from his due punishment. To all these, I say, the believer will refuse to listen. Yet hold fast by the holy Church, which confesses God the Father Almighty, and His only Son, Jesus Christ our Lord, and the Holy Ghost, of one concordant and harmonious substance; which believes that the Son of God was born of the Virgin, suffered for man's salvation, rose again from the dead in the same flesh in which He was born; which hopes, lastly, that He will come as the Judge of all; for by Him both the forgiveness of sins and the resurrection of the flesh are preached.

40. As to the FORGIVENESS OF SINS, mere belief should be enough. For who would ask the cause or the reason when a prince grants a benefit? When the liberality of an earthly sovereign is not a matter for discussion, shall man rashly discuss the beneficence of God? For the Pagans often ridicule us, saying that we deceive ourselves by imagining that crimes committed in deed can be absolved by words. And

they say, "Can he who has committed murder be no murderer, and he who has committed adultery be considered no adulterer? How then does one guilty of crimes of this kind suddenly seem to you to be made holy?" To this, however, as I said, we answer better by faith than by reason. For He is King of all who has promised it: He is Lord of heaven and earth who assures us of it. Would you have me refuse to believe that He who made me a man of the dust of the earth can of a guilty person make me innocent? And that He who when I was blind made me see, or when I was deaf gave me hearing, or when I was lame the power to walk, can recover for me my lost innocence? And to come to the evidence of nature itself, to kill a man is not always criminal, but to kill in malice and not lawfully is criminal. Hence in such things it is not the deed that condemns me, for sometimes it is rightly done, but it is the mind with its evil intentions. If then my mind which had become criminal, and in which the sin originated, is corrected, why should I seem to you incapable of being made innocent, who before was criminal? For if it is indeed allowed, as I have already shown, that the crime consists not in the deed but in the will, then, just as an evil will, prompted by an evil spirit, has made me liable to sin and death, so also the will, prompted by the good God, being changed to good, has restored me to innocence and life. This is also the case in all other crimes. And thus there is found to be no opposition between our faith and natural reason, since forgiveness of sins is accorded not to actions, which cannot be changed, but to the mind, which it is certain can be converted from bad to good.

41. The last article, which maintains the RESURRECTION

OF THE FLESH, concludes the sum of all perfection with concise brevity. Yet on this point also the faith of the Church is attacked, not only by Gentiles, but by heretics. For Valentinus altogether denies the resurrection of the flesh, and so do the Manichæans, as we have already shown. And they will not listen to the Prophet Isaiah when he says, "The dead shall rise, and they who are in the grave shall be raised."1 Or to the most wise Daniel, when he declares, "Then they who are in the dust of the earth shall arise. these to eternal life, but those to shame and eternal confusion."2 Yet even in the Gospels, which they appear to accept, they ought to learn from our Lord and Saviour, who says, when instructing the Sadducees, "That the dead rise again: have ye not read how he saith to Moses in the bush. "I am the God of Isaac, the God of Jacob? Now God is not the God of the dead, but of the living."3 In the same passage He has already declared how wonderful and how great is the glory of the resurrection, when He says, "But in the resurrection of the dead they will neither marry nor be given in marriage, but will be as the angels of God."4 For the power of the resurrection confers on men an angelic state, so that they who have risen from the earth do not live again on the earth with the animals, but with the angels in heaven. Yet this is only granted to those whom the purity of their life has made worthy, that is to say, those who by their chaste behaviour have preserved the flesh of their soul and subdued it to the Spirit, and have thus deserved to bear it, cleansed from all stain of sin and changed into spiritual glory, into the company of the angels.

¹ Isa. xxvi, 19. ² Dan. xii. 2. ³ Mark xii. 26 f. ⁴ Ibid. 25.

42. The unbelievers, however, protest and say, How can the flesh, which has putrefied and dissolved, or been changed into dust, or sometimes even swallowed up by the sea and dispersed by the waves, be collected together again and be once more united and formed again into a human body? We may answer them for the present in the words of Paul, "Thou fool, that which thou sowest is not quickened, except it die. And that which thou sowest, thou sowest not the body which shall be, but bare grain of wheat or of some other seed: but God giveth it a body as seemeth good to him."1 Can you not believe that the change which you see taking place each year in the seeds which you put into the ground will also be accomplished in your flesh which by the law of God is sown in the earth? Why, then, do you think so meanly and so lightly of God's power that you cannot believe it possible for the scattered dust of which each man's flesh is composed to be brought together once again and restored to its own proper form? Can you not consider it possible when you see how the skill of man searches for veins of metal hidden deep in the ground, and the eye of the miner discovers gold where the ignorant thinks there is only earth? Why should we refuse to grant those things to Him who made man, when he whom He made can do so much? And since the skill of man can discover that gold has its own proper vein, and silver another, while copper differs yet more, and iron and lead are also unlike, though all lie hidden, as it seems, in mere earth, can we think of the Divine power as unable to discover and distinguish the component parts of each man's flesh, even though they seem to have been dispersed?

¹ Cor. xv. 36 ff.

43. We will try, however, to assist by means of reasons drawn from nature those souls which are wanting in faith. When any one mixes various kinds of seeds together and sows them indiscriminately or scatters them broadcast upon the earth, does not the grain of each kind, wherever it may have been thrown, shoot forth in due time according to its own proper nature, and so produce anew its own form and substance?

Thus indeed, although the substance of each man's flesh be variously scattered and dispersed, yet the rational principle which is in his flesh is immortal, as being the flesh of an immortal soul. As soon, then, as it may please the true God, after our bodies have been sown in the earth, it collects from the earth and attracts to itself its various parts, making up their complete number and restoring them to the form which had been destroyed by death. And so it will come about that to each soul will be restored not a composite or alien body, but rather that very body which it possessed before, that thus the flesh with its own soul may, in reward for the conflicts of the present life, be crowned if undefiled, or punished if defiled. And therefore our Church, in teaching the faith of the Creed, is somewhat cautious, and instead of saying "the resurrection of the flesh," as do the other Churches, makes the single addition of a pronoun, and says "the resurrection of THIS flesh." And by "this" is here meant, without doubt, the flesh of him who professes his belief and makes the sign of the cross upon his forehead. For this he does that each of the faithful may know that his flesh, if he keep it free from sin, will be a vessel of honour, useful to the Lord, prepared for every good work, but if

defiled by sins, a vessel of wrath destined to destruc-

But now, if any one desires to know more with regard to the greatness of the promise by which God has bound Himself, he will find mention in almost all the Divine books. And from these, merely by way of reminder, we will here quote a few passages, and so end this small work for which you made request. The Apostle Paul, in asserting that mortal flesh will rise, makes use of the following arguments. "But if there be no resurrection of the dead, then is not Christ risen. And if Christ be not risen, our preaching is vain and your faith vain." And again, a few words later, he says, "But now is Christ risen from the dead, the firstfruits of them that sleep. For since by man came death, by man came also the resurrection from the dead. For as in Adam all die, even so in Christ shall all be made alive. But every man in his own order. Christ the firstfruits, afterwards they that are Christ's at his coming, then cometh the end."2 And again he adds, "Behold I shew you a mystery: we shall all rise indeed, but we shall not all be changed "; or as other copies read, "We shall all sleep indeed, but we shall not all be changed; in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump; for the trumpet shall sound, and the dead shall rise incorruptible, and we shall all be changed."3 But yet, however this may be, in writing to the Thessalonians, he says, "I would not have you ignorant, brethren, concerning those who are asleep, that ye sorrow not, as the others who have no hope. For if we believe that Jesus died and rose again, so those also who sleep through Jesus shall God bring

² I Cor, xv, 16 f. ² Ibid, 20-24. ³ Ibid, 51 f.

with Him. For this we say unto you by the word of the Lord, that we who are alive and remain at the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them that sleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, with the trump of God, and the dead who are in Christ shall rise first: then we who are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we ever be with the Lord." 1

44. But that you may not imagine this to be some new doctrine peculiar to Paul, hear what the Prophet Ezekiel foretold by the Holy Ghost. "Behold," he says, "I will open your graves, and will bring you forth out of your graves."2 Hear also how plainly Job, who abounds in mystical language, predicts the resurrection of the dead. "There is hope for a tree; for if it be cut down it will sprout again, and its shoot shall never fail. But if its root have waxed old in the earth, and the stock thereof be dead in the dust, yet through the scent of water it will flourish again, and put forth shoots as a young plant. But man, if he be dead, is he departed and gone? And mortal man, if he have fallen, shall he be no more?"3 Does it not seem to you that in these words he is seeking, as it were, to rouse men to a sense of shame by saying, Is mankind so foolish, that when they see the stock of a tree which has been cut down sending up shoots again from the ground, and dead wood once more restored to life, they can suppose that they have nothing in common with wood or trees? In order, however, to convince you that the words of Job are to be read as a question, when he says, "But mortal man when he hath fallen shall he not

¹ I Thess. iv. 13-17. ² Ezek. xxxvii. 12. ³ Job xiv. 7-10.

rise again?" take this proof from the sentence which follows; for his next words are, "But if a man be dead, shall he live?" And a few words later, he says, "I will wait till I be made again." And again he repeats, "Who shall raise again upon the earth my skin which now suffers these things."

45. So much then in proof of the confession which we make in the Creed when we say "The resurrection of this flesh." As to the addition "this," see how closely it agrees with all that we have quoted from the Divine books. For what else does Job mean in the passage which we have already explained, "He will raise again my skin which now suffers these things," that is, which endures these torments? Does he not plainly say that there will be a resurrection of this flesh, this, that is to say, which is now suffering the tortures of afflictions and temptations? Further, when the Apostle says, "This corruptible must put on incorruption, and this mortal must put on immortality,"4 are not his words those of one who, as it were, touches his body and lays his finger upon it. This body then, which is now corruptible, will by the grace of the resurrection be incorruptible, and this which is now mortal will be clothed with the powers of immortality, that as "Christ rising from the dead dieth no more, death hath no more dominion over him,"5 so those who shall rise in Christ will never again feel corruption or death, not because the nature of flesh will then be done away, but because its condition and quality will be changed. There will be a body, therefore, which shall rise from the dead incorruptible and

¹ Job xiv. 14.

² Ibid. 3.

³ Ibid. 22.

⁴ I Cor. xv. 53.

⁵ Rom, vi. 9.

immortal, not only of the righteous, but also of sinners; of the righteous that they may be able ever to abide with Christ, of sinners that they may ever and without end suffer that punishment which is their due.

46. That the righteous shall ever abide with Christ our Lord we have already proved when we shewed how the Apostle says, "Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught up together with them in the clouds to meet Christ in the air, and so shall we be ever with the Lord." And do not be surprised that the flesh of the saints should be changed into so great glory at the resurrection as to be caught up to meet God, suspended in the clouds, and borne in the air, seeing that the same Apostle, when declaring the great things which God bestows upon them that love Him, says, "Who shall change our vile body that it may be made like unto his glorious body."2 It is thus not by any means absurd that the bodies of the saints are spoken of as being raised up into the air, since they are also said to be renewed after the image of Christ's body, which is seated at the right hand of God. And indeed the holy Apostle adds, speaking either of himself or of others of his own place and merit, "He will raise us up together with Christ and make us sit together in the heavenly places."3 Wherefore since the saints of God have all these promises and many others of like nature with regard to the resurrection of the righteous, it will not now be difficult also to believe those which the Prophets have predicted, namely, that "the righteous shall shine as the sun and as the brightness of the firmament in the kingdom

¹ 1 Thess. iv. 16 f. ² Phil. iii. 21. ³ Eph. ii. 6.

of God." For why is it hard to believe that they should have the brightness of the sun, and be adorned with the splendour of the stars and of the firmament, for whom the life and conversation of God's angels is being prepared in heaven, or who are spoken of as hereafter to be conformed to the glory of Christ's body? And in respect of that glory which has been promised by the mouth of the Saviour Himself, the holy Apostle says, "It is sown an animal body; it will rise a spiritual body." For if it be true, as indeed it is, that God will deign to admit each one of the righteous and of the saints to companionship with the angels, it is certain that He will also change their bodies into the glory of a spiritual body.

47. And this promise should not seem to you to be contrary to the natural structure of the body. For if we believe that, as it is written, God took the clay of the earth and made man, and that the nature of our body was such that by the will of God earth was changed into flesh, why does it seem absurd to you or contrary to reason, if on the same principle by which earth is said to have been advanced to the condition of an animal body, an animal body should also, as we believe, have been exalted into a spiritual body? All these things and many like them concerning the resurrection of the righteous you will find in the Divine Scriptures. To sinners also there will be given, as we have already said, a condition of incorruption and immortality by virtue of the resurrection, that as God grants it to the righteous for a perpetual glory, so He may administer it to sinners to prolong their confusion and punishment. For so indeed

¹ Matt. xiii. 43. 2 I Cor. xv. 44.

the words of the Prophet, which we have already quoted, expressly declare, "Many shall rise from the dust of the earth, these to life eternal, and these to confusion and eternal shame."

48. So then if we have understood in what deep veneration God Almighty is called Father, and in what mysterious sense our Lord Jesus Christ is held to be His Son, and with what complete fulness of meaning His Spirit is called the Holy Spirit, and how the Holy Trinity is one in substance but distinct in relation and in Persons; if also we have understood what was the birth from the Virgin, what the nativity of the Word in the flesh, what the mystery of the Cross, what the purpose of the Divine descent into hell, what the glory of the resurrection, and the release from captivity of souls in the lower regions; what also was His ascension into heaven, and what the expected advent of the Judge; and further, how the holy Church ought to be acknowledged rather than the congregations of vanity; what also is the number of the sacred books, and what conventicles of heretics are to be avoided; how in the forgiveness of sins there is no opposition of any kind between the Divine freedom and natural reason, and how not only the Divine oracles but also the example of our Lord and Saviour Himself, as well as the conclusions of natural reason, attest the truth of the resurrection of the flesh,-if, I say, we have attentively followed all these in their natural order, according to the tradition herein expounded, we pray that the Lord will grant to us, and to all who hear these words, that having kept the faith which we have received, and having finished

¹ Dan. xii. 2.

our course, we may await the crown of righteousness which is laid up for us, and be found among those who shall rise again to eternal life, and be delivered from confusion and everlasting shame, through Christ our Lord, through whom to God the Father Almighty with the Holy Ghost are glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

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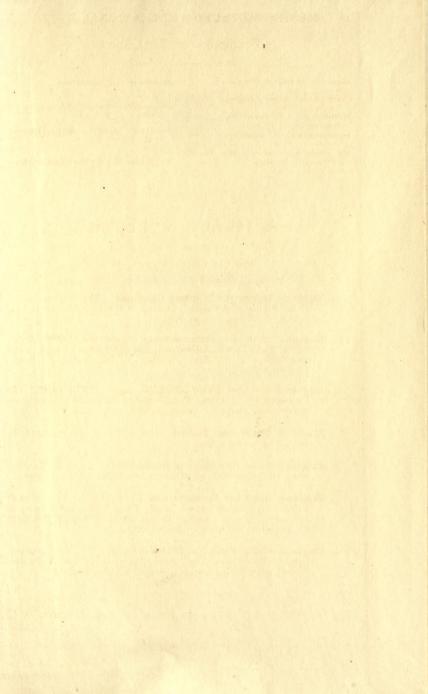
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